1: Allen H-4 (no date) 1932 RI1 Georgia RI1

Akhaltzikhé.[1] To this present day, many villages, particularly in the mountainous country of the upper Mtkvari, consist of hovels, hollowed partly out of the rocks and made habitable by a wall of stone and plaster on one or two sides. To so great an extent was the use of rock-dwellings a part of the domestic economy of the Georgians, that more than one of these trogoldytic sites grew to the dimensions of a town, and to the significance of a royal residence. Uplistzikhé you may see soon after the train leaves Gori for Tiflis. "The castle of Uplos" is carved out of a long low ridge of rock, which overlooks the wide valley of the Mtkvari. Here, cut out of the natural caves of the ancient mountain, is a great hall of audience, baths and reservoirs, a church, and numerous lesser dwellings, covered passage ways, and a secret way down to the water of the river. The style of architecture of the great hall of audience and the church indicate that certainly as late as the twelfth century it was restored and prepared for the reception of a new master. More inaccessible and less ancient is the cave-town of Vardzia which lies up in the mountains, a few miles west of Khertvisi on the main road from Akhaltzikhé to Akhalkalaki. Vardzia—the rose-fortress—was a town of unascertained antiquity. Its royal palace and its church were, according to the Annals and to Wakhushti, begun by King Giorgi III and completed by Queen Tamara.

The settled sites of early Georgia consisted, therefore, of towns and villages of wood-tiled houses in the open Mtkvari plain, and—where the mountain side offered a worn flank—of rough troglodytic dwellings, which, as at Uplistzikhé and Vardzia, grew to the rank of royal towns.

In the upper valley of the Mtkvari and in the valley of the Chorokhi, the people have for the most part lived always a half-nomadic life, packed in the winter into troglodytic hovels among the boulders along the narrow valleys of the rivers; moving in summer to camp over the lush highland pastures. Such to-day is the habit of the Tatars of the eastern Caucasus, nomads by race, who move their quarters from the Mughan plain in winter to the mountains of Karabagh in the summer

[1] In the summer of 1926, I found many of the inhabitants of Gori, a comparatively large town on the Trans-Caucasian Railway, living in troglodytic conditions, as the result of the destruction of their houses by an earthquake. Xenophon, IV, v., 25, has left a description of life in these troglodytic dwellings. "Their houses were underground, the entrance like the mouth of a well, but spacious below: there were passages dug into them for the cattle, but the people descended by ladders. In the houses were goats, sheep, cows and fowls with their young; all the cattle were kept on fodder within the walls. There was also wheat, barley, leguminous vegetables and barley-wine in large bowls."

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361 months; and of the Kurds all over the upland country from
166 Van to Ardahani. Such also is the habit of the Georgian-speaking Ajars, who in the summer move up from the hot valleys to the alpine meadows of Karchkhali and Shavsheti;[1] and of the people of the right bank of the Mtkvari in its upper course, and of its smaller tributaries, which fall north from the Trialetian mountains into the middle valley. And the people of the valleys of the Ktzia-Khrami and Berduji move their herds in summer to the highland lakes, to Panavari—"the lake of butterflies", and to Saghamo—"the evening lake", called Tuman Göl, "the mist lake", by the Turks.[2]

This half-migratory habit of the people of the upland country can explain the lack of topographical detail of the early Greek geographers, and their exaggerated ideas of the barbarous character of the inhabitants thereabouts.[3]

133 The westward limits of the Georgian-speaking country,
172 and the limit also of that country which is regarded as Georgian by the authors of the Georgian Annals, is indicated roughly by the line of the great trunk-road from Trebizond to Erzerum. The southern limit of the Georgian country on this side were the mountains overhanging the valley of the Araks from the north. This country is in the shape of a foreshortened arm, extending westward from the twin-body of the Rioni-Mtkvari basin. The long narrow valley of the Chorokhi, running west to east, divides the mountain country into two. The mountains to the north of the Chorokhi are the country of the Lazes or Chans (La-zan), Chaneti of the Georgian Annals.[4] The Laz communes cling to the narrow foreshore of the sea, and are scattered along the sides of the short narrow valleys falling steeply from the high mountains. Their settlements are communes rather than villages, as in the Ajar country,

[1] See *Zap. Kav. Ot. I.R.G.O.*, X, Part I, D. Kazbegi, *Tri mesyatz v' Turetskoi Gruzii*, for an account of the nomadizing of the Ajars.

[2] Wakhushti remarks curiously about Lake Parnavari to this effect, about the summer migration of the kine: "Lake Parnavari is very large and full of fish which are not very savoury. Since in summer, great numbers of sheep, of horses, of cattle and beasts from Kartli and Kakheti are stationed round about, and since their excrement is washed down to the lake by the melting of the snows, they say that this is the cause of the bad taste of the fish."—Wakhushti, *D.G.*, p. 163.

[3] Procopius, in the sixth century A.D., says: "The mountains of the Meskhoi are not rough or unproductive of crops, but they abound in all good things, since the Meskhoi, for their part, are skilful farmers, and there are actually vineyards in their country. However, this land is hemmed in by mountains which are very lofty and covered by forests, so that they are exceedingly difficult to pass through."—*History of the Wars*, VIII, ii., 25, 26.

[4] The name Lazistan is Turkish. The Greeks called the country Lazica, including under this form also Mingrelia. La- is a Svanian territorial prefix, and the Svanians call Mingrelia, as well as Lazistan—Lazan—the land of the *Zan*←→*Chan*←→*San*←→*Span* (cf. Procopius, I, xv, 21, who speaks of the Tzani or Sani).

[Medieval Georgia]

COURT AND ADMINISTRATION

entitled. The King controlled the farming of the famous mineral springs at Tiflis and he farmed the monopoly of the sale of brandy. He and his *Mdivan-begi* or Chief Judge had a share of all judicial fines imposed and of damages gained by plaintiff parties. The King drew rents from the irrigation canals and revenue from taxes on wine, on flocks and on the tents of nomads; the shopkeepers of Tiflis bore the cost of the lighting of the royal palace; one district was under the obligation to supply beaters for the King's hunt; another to cart snow for the ice storage of his larders. In a third district we learn that the King having originally distributed geese to the inhabitants, there was an annual tax of two goslings on every goose. Further examples of ingenious but unscientific extraction were taxes on married men, ploughs, furnaces, beasts of burden and falcons and their nests.

Another—and a principal—source of revenue, particularly in times of emergency, were the special poll-taxes which were levied sometimes on the individual or on families, at other times on houses, cattle, horses, trees or agricultural produce. Such taxes were generally levied in the emergency of war, but from the sixteenth century onwards they were more often extracted to meet the demands of the commanders of invading armies of Persians and Turks. We have already referred to the taxes imposed during the days of the Mongol hegemony and to the special levies in human kind made by the Shah and the Sultan, to meet which the Georgian Kings on occasion made levies with the object of purchasing substitute slaves from the mountaineers.

The invaders from time to time also made direct capital impositions. In 1724, the Turks imposed a poll-tax on the whole male population and levied also on cattle, horses and agricultural produce; and in 1736 the Persians imposed such an onerous tax on cattle and trees that five years later the army of Nadir Shah was beset by famine. The Persian exactions continued until in 1747, when King Taymuraz II effected a kind of general strike by moving all the peasantry of the open country into the hills and strong places. As a result, Nadir reduced his imposition from 200,000 to 25,000 *tumans*.

Lastly, throughout the Middle Ages the Kings not infrequently levied special poll-taxes enduring over a period of years, the proceeds of which were spent in the repair of churches and royal castles, and of towns which had been devastated during foreign invasions.

It was the practice of the Georgian kings and of the earlier